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APPLIED FORESTRY NOTES
NORTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN
FOREST AND RANGE EXPERIMENT STATION

No. 91

Missoula, Montana

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**PRODUCTION OF LUMBER, LATH, AND SHINGLES
IN IDAHO AND MONTANA, 1938. 1/**

The statistics presented in this preliminary summary of reports covering all lumber, lath, and shingle mills of record in Idaho and Montana are based on returns from the annual lumber census inquiry conducted by the Forest Service in cooperation with the Bureau of the Census. All 1938 figures shown in this statement 2/ are preliminary and subject to possible corrections in the final report to be published by the Bureau of the Census.

In 1938, the large gains in volume of lumber production reported annually from 1933 to 1937 were largely offset by a decline which caused the combined lumber output of these two States to drop from 1,132,537 M feet for 1937 to 792,040 M feet for 1938. Total production of lath in the two States decreased 37 percent from 77,586 M pieces in 1937 to 48,752 M pieces in 1938.

In contrast with the decreased output of both lumber and lath during 1938, the upward trend in shingle production recorded for each year from 1933 to 1937 was not interrupted. On the contrary, the total quantity of shingles manufactured increased from 38,588 squares in 1937 to 40,086 squares in 1938.

1/ By C. N. Whitney, special agent, Bureau of the Census, and associate forester, Northern Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station.

2/ Released for publication.

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As reported for each State separately, the Idaho shingle cut for 1938 amounted to 35,644 squares, a gain of 4.2 percent over 34,205 squares for the preceding year. Montana's shingle output in the year 1938 amounted to 4,442 squares, showing a gain of 1.3 percent over 4,383 squares reported in 1937.

Lumber production statistics for 1938 for each State by species are given in table 1.

Table 1.-Lumber cut by species, 1938, M feet B.M.
(Mills cutting 50 M or over)

Kind of wood	Idaho	Montana	Combined cut	
			Volume	Percent
Idaho white pine	286,754	21,139	307,893	38.9
Ponderosa pine	186,153	106,850	293,003	37.0
Douglas fir	48,963	39,930	88,893	11.2
Western larch	20,667	45,463	66,130	8.4
White fir	16,973	357	17,330	2.2
Spruce	3,431	6,373	9,804	1.2
Cedar	4,596	37	4,633	0.6
Lodgepole pine	1,820	1,350	3,170	0.4
All other	1,154	30	1,184 ^{1/}	0.1
Total	570,511	221,529	792,040	100.0
Lath, M pieces	36,907	11,845	48,752	
Shingles, squares	35,644	4,442	40,086	

^{1/} Includes 845 M hemlock and 339 M cottonwood.

The relative proportion of the total lumber cut produced by the larger mills of these two States was practically the same in 1938 as it was in both 1936 and 1937. In 1938, 85.6 percent of the aggregate cut of 792,040 M was manufactured by 29 mills each cutting 5,000 M feet or over, and 14.4 percent by 301 mills of smaller capacity cutting from 50 M to 5,000 M during the year.

In addition to the mills cutting 50 M feet and upward, 59 mills in Idaho and 86 in Montana reported production amounting to less than 50 M each in 1938. The aggregate additional production reported by these very small mills, not covered by cut figures included in table 1, amounted to 1,381 M for Idaho and 1,680 M for Montana.

The following tabulation compares annual lumber production records covering the 6-year period 1933 to 1938:

Table 2.-Reported total lumber cut, M feet B.M.
(Mills cutting less than 50 M excluded)

Year	Idaho	Montana	Aggregate cut	
			Volume	Percent of increase or decrease from preceding year
1933	316,471	125,126	441,597	+ 22.9
1934	457,089	171,841	628,930	+ 42.4
1935	609,212	233,633	842,845	+ 34.0
1936	723,804	295,233	1,019,037	+ 20.9
1937	797,492	335,045	1,132,537	+ 11.1
1938	570,511	221,529	792,040	- 30.1

For the past 6 years, from 75 to 78 percent of the aggregate lumber cut of Idaho and Montana has consisted of Idaho white pine and ponderosa pine. However, during that period the relative proportion contributed by white pine is shown to have steadily decreased from year to year while the proportion of ponderosa pine has increased in approximately the same ratio. In other words, a gradual decrease in the percentage of white pine has practically been counterbalanced each year by a corresponding increase in the percentage of ponderosa pine reported.

In 1933 the cut of white pine amounted to 50.8 percent and the cut of ponderosa pine amounted to 27.6 percent of the total volume of all species reported. In 1938 white pine contributed 38.9 percent and ponderosa pine 37 percent of the total output for the two States.

The proportional percentages of Douglas fir, western larch, white fir, spruce, cedar, hemlock, lodgepole pine, and cottonwood, which collectively have comprised from 22 to 25 percent of the total annual cut of Idaho and Montana since 1933, have fluctuated within only very narrow limits. From 1933 to 1938, 17 to 21 percent of the total cut has consisted of Douglas fir and larch. The combined cut of white fir, spruce, cedar, hemlock, lodgepole pine, and cottonwood has accounted for only 4 to 5 percent annually.